IN THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend the paragraph on page 3, lines 6 - 8, following the SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION heading as follows:

The present invention provides a method of long-term low temperature annealing of semiconductor devices to form ohmic contact regions between a layer of wide band-gap semiconductor material and ~~spaced-apart~~ contact areas disposed thereon.

Please amend the paragraph on page 5, line 19 through page 6, line 9, as follows:

Contact layer 16, such as, for example, aluminum, zinc, nickel or other similar metal, is formed by, for example, sputtering, chemical vapor deposition, or other processes, over wide band-gap semiconductor material layer 14. Contact layer 16 and wide band-gap semiconductor material layer 14 are in substantially continuous contact. As deposited and prior to annealing, contact layer 16 forms a rectifying or otherwise non-ohmic connection to wide band-gap semiconductor material layer 14. Contact layer 16 is typically patterned and etched by known methods to expose desired portions of wide band-gap semiconductor material layer 14. Features (not shown) are then etched in the wide band-gap semiconductor material layer 14 using known methods, and to form functional circuit structures and thereby a functional semiconductor device 10. The portion or portions of contact layer 16 that remain after etching define one or more contact areas 20 (Fig. 2).

Please amend the paragraph on page 7, line 17 through page 8 line 5, as follows:

Referring now to Fig. [[2]] 4, the current vs. voltage curves obtained between two spaced-apart contact regions 22 formed as a result of various annealing parameters are shown. In the exemplary embodiment of the method of the present invention, a plurality of devices 10 were formed. Devices 10 included nickel (Ni) contacts 20 having an approximate thickness of from 2400 to 2600 Angstroms. The contacts 20 were deposited via electron beam evaporation at a background pressure of approximately $1x10^{-7}$ Torr onto a wide band-gap semiconductor material layer 14 of 4H silicon carbide (SiC). The devices 10 were then divided into several groups of one or more devices. Each group was then subjected to respective annealing processes of correspondingly different temperatures and/or durations.

Please amend the paragraph on page 11, lines 18 – 21, as follows:

In the embodiment shown, the wide band-gap semiconductor material is configured as 4H silicon carbide. However, it is to be understood that the method of the present invention is equally applicable to different poly-types of silicon carbide, such as, for example, ~~6H SiC and 3C SiC.~~ 6H-SiC and 3C-SiC.

Respectfully submitted,

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